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Or,

PIQUE AND PASSION.



A COMEDY-DRAMA

IN

Three Acts,

BY

FENNIMORE HARRISON.

NEW ORLEANS:

1883.

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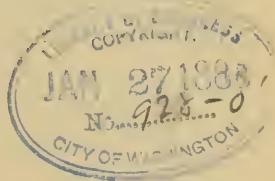
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Hatley Norton Harrison.

NEW ORLEANS:
M. J. SCOTT, 405 MAGAZINE STREET.
1883.

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BY

Walter Hodge

(FENNIMORE) HARRISON. *am*

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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SHERIDAN TRUE,	- - - - -	<i>A Dramatist.</i>
MADAME CELESTE HAUTEUX,	- - - - -	<i>A woman who vacillates in mind.</i>
ADRIAN MARCELLE,	- - - - -	<i>Who flees from home.</i>
LILLIAN,	- - - - -	<i>True's sister.</i>
FRANK CLAIR,	- - - - -	<i>A Lieutenant in the National Guards.</i>
FENTON FRERE,	- - - - -	<i>A Critic and Reporter.</i>
DOCTOR QUIET,	- - - - -	<i>Who diagnoses</i>
NELL,	- - - - -	<i>True's aesthetic maid.</i>
MAURICE HAUTEUX,	- - - - -	<i>A nephew.</i>
SHERIDAN TRUE, JR.,	- - - - -	<i>An uninvited guest.</i>
RODERICK MILES,	- - - - -	<i>A theatrical manager.</i>
JERROLD QUIZ,	- - - - -	<i>A landlord.</i>
MRS. POSITIVE,	- - - - -	<i>Matron of St. Therese Hospital, Metz</i>
REV. MR. DIMITRY,	- - - - -	<i>Who objects, "under the circumstances."</i>

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ACT I.....Paris.

ACT II.....Metz.

ACT III.....Paris.

TIME.....Just after the close of the Franco-Prussian War

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ACT I.

SCENE—The parlor of Sheridan True's house, Paris. It is the night of a marriage ceremony, and the parlor presents an appropriate and handsome appearance.

Enter NELL, with flowers in her hand.

Nell. Flowers, flowers, flowers! I have been arranging them all the afternoon for—whom?—Some stranger, I suppose—some lady, perhaps. It is now evening, and Mr. True has not returned. Well, then, something strange will happen to-night, I am sure. I wonder what it will be? Can it be a marriage? Oh, no! he is a bachelor. The idea! Whoever heard of a bachelor's marrying on the sly—oh, on the sly?

Perhaps that is it. We shall see. I am curious to know what has kept him away so long (*the bell rings*). Somebody at the bell: a visitor, I warrant (*peeps out at a door*). Yes, a lady in black, heavily veiled. She is coming. I wonder who it is?

Enter MADAME HAUTEUX.

Haut. This, I understand, is Mr. Sheridan True's residence?

Nell. It is, Madame. It has just been fitted up.

Haut. Here is my card, I wish to see him at once.

Nell. Indeed, you cannot. He is not here.

Haut. Not here?—(*aside*) Then I must find it out from her. (*lifts her veil*).

Nell. Oh, Madame Hauteux!—I did not even know your voice, it has changed so.

Haut. You are surprised then?—Come, Nell, why did you leave my employ—Why did you *all* leave me? Did you not like my *salon*?

Nell. I liked your place very much, Madame, and would have staid there with you,—but—I also liked Mr. Sheridan True. Wherever he goes, I go.

Haut. Silly girl!—But look—these flowers, Nell—What do *they* mean?

Nell (*aside*). How wildly she talks!—That is a secret, Madame. And yet I have known you so long, I will tell you. I *think* it is his wedding night.

Haut. His wedding night?—(*reflects*) Ah, yes, I have heard so. Nell, here is a letter of mine which I wish you to deliver to Mr. True this evening, in case I do not see him. It is a letter of congratulation and good wishes. Will you forget it?

Nell. Never, Madame; I will put it where he will be sure to find it, on his mantle-piece (*goes to a door*).

Haut. Now tell me, Nell, who is this *woman* that has charmed his fancy and drawn him away so suddenly?

Nell. Indeed, I could not tell you, Madame. I have never seen her.—(*aside*) She is piqued, at something I am sure (*exit*).

Haut. She does not know! What if I be wrong?—I? No, no, 'tis impossible! Wrong?—My mind wanders!—Surely, I have seen him with her—and he has played me false! The man whose life I guarded through a siege of pain and suffering—whom my devotion saved from death—this man, Sheridan True, has turned his back upon his benefactress, and pledged his hand and honor to another! Then let it be. This sudden change in him has wrought a swifter change in me, and love, when it is scorned, can turn upon its idol and dash it down. And so I will. I will meet them face to face, and over-turn their plans. I will harass both of them. I will drive this woman from his doors, and make this place as desolate as mine! (*exit*)

RE-ENTER NELL.

Nell. Gone! Well, I am glad of it. I wonder what she means by coming here and frightening me? Women are such unreasonable creatures when they are miserable, nothing satisfies them but that they must try and make everybody else so. And how did she hear of this marriage? Oh, yes! I remember now: 'Twas yesterday, or the day before, that Mr. True requested a friend of hers, the Rev. Mr. Dimitry to be here to-night on important business— as he called it—and from him, no doubt, she learned it.—There! I hear footsteps again. Nearer and nearer (*goes to a door*). Now, Maurice, what is it brings you here to-night? You know I don't want to see you.

Maurice (in the doorway). Pardon me, Nell, pardon me. I know you don't care a straw for me—(*takes her hand*).

Nell. Go away, I will tell on you.

Maurice. Tell on me? Who is there to tell?

Nell. Your aunt, Madame Huteux. She was here just now.

Maurice. My aunt here? (*looks around*) Away from Metz?—If she knew that I was here with you, she would never forgive me. She is very anxious for me to marry an heiress—

Nell. Oh!

Maurice. What is the matter, Nell?—

Nell. You know, Maurice, I have been unwell during the past hour or two. But do go, Mr. True will be here presently.

Maurice. I say, Nell, there is to be a wedding here to night.

Nell. Pray, how did you find that out?

Maurice. Look at this pretty parlor: that tells the tale.

Nell. Indeed, Maurice, you must and shall go. No refusal!

Maurice. I say, Nell, there is to be a costly supper after the ceremony—the finest in Paris—save me some of the wedding cake

Nell. Maurice, I will not have you here!

Maurice (at the door in the background). Nell, oh Nell, I shall wait you at the garden gate: bring it there—the wedding cake (*exit*).

Nell. He provokes me much. He will linger at the gate now, and talk to every passerby in the street, and—oh! I never thought of it! He may report that Mr. True is married, which would be false (*runs to the door*). He is gone!—just in time, too; for my master, Mr. Sheridan True, is actually coming with—with—my!—with a lady. It must be an elopement. Now for that letter (*exit*).

ENTER SHERIDAN TRUE WITH ADRIAN MARCELLE, *who evinces some excitement at first.*

True. Now, Adrian, we are safe in Paris, and your uncle, George Marcelle, may follow if he likes. But I hardly think he will take such a course to-night.

Adrian. Oh, I hope not! But then he may, and if he should come—

True. I will send him back to Metz without you. I have no fancy for your uncle, though he is your only relative.

Adrian. Yes—he is: but I am quite willing to leave him in Metz, I am sure; and I hope he will always stay away from here.

True. You may be sure of that. He will certainly remain away, provided you exercise a woman's traditional authority in her own house, and I have no doubt you will.

Adrian. We shall see at any rate. He is such a crabbed, headstrong old bachelor.

True. Crabbed?—so he is: but is that a characteristic of every bachelor?

Adrian. Oh, no! of course not. You are not a bachelor any longer, and your friends must give you up.

True. I suppose they must, as I have torn myself away from them. To night, their curiosity will be excited, I know. They will marvel at my sudden disappearance, and when the members of the "Bachelors' Club" of Paris, hear of my desertion—

Adrian. "Bachelors' Club?"—And do you belong to such a club as that?

True. I? Yes, Adrian, I do,—I am the President of it. I haven't spoken to you about it lately because—er—I had an idea it would be an awkward confession to make. Several years ago I was instrumental in forming it; but that is no reason why I should not follow the example of other presidents—and abscond, as it were. Do you think so?

Adrian. No, indeed: you are very courageous. Your friends will choose another President, I am sure, and then I shall invite them here. May I?

True. Certainly. I shall invite them all, and specially my friend, Madame Hauteux—(*aside*) I wonder how I am getting on?

Adrian (suddenly). Madame Hauteux, your pretty landlady? I have heard strange things of her; I should like to know her.

True. And you shall. She befriended me when I first came to Paris, Adrian. I was ill at her house for a long time, and when I recovered just two weeks ago, and came to this new residence, she seemed to take it to heart—

Adrian. Indeed!—That was strange. Does she like you?

True. As a friend she does. She saved my life, Adrian, and that is why I cannot forget her.

Adrian. Oh, well, you should in turn befriend her—but—

True (aside, with a smile). Adrian is jealous!—

Adrian. What was I going to say?

True. Something ridiculous, I dare say.—Oh, no, I spoke of her pleasantly just now, because it occurred to me, at the moment, that I ought not to have left her house so suddenly. That was all. Her portrait, life-size, is hanging over the mantle in the dining room now.

Adrian. It is?—I shall go and study her features, till you call me presently (*goes to a door: True follows her*).

True. Now, Adrian, you like your new home, do you not?

Adrian. How could you ask me such a question? Everything is as novel as it is beautiful.

True. And you are happy here?

Adrian. Oh, perfectly happy!—Good bye (*exit*).

True. I am alone—yes, alone, and the novelty of my position comes home to my consciousness. I will sit down at once and write my letter of resignation as President of the “Bachelors’ Club” of Paris. By the way, this is not the time to do that. I have something much more important to attend to (*calls*). Nellie! Nellie! (*Nell enters and delivers the letter*) Ah, you have a letter for me.

Nell. He hasn’t come yet, Mr. True.

True (surprised). You mean the Rev. Mr. Dimitry?

Nell. Yes, sir.

True. It is ten minutes after the time, and I am still a bachelor. (*quaintly*) Nell, you must move around briskly now, you hear?

Nell. Yes, sir.

True. And never let the Madame call you twice, bear that in mind, too.

Nell. Yes, sir.

True. Run on now: the Madame will be after you presently (*exit Nell; opens the letter*). Let me see—from Madame Hauteux! Singular. It is a letter of congratulation, too! I

wonder how she heard of my intended marriage? I have been under the impression that it was a profound secret. I see too, that she has moved away from Paris and gone to Metz within the past two weeks. That is a strange notion, to be sure. I am sorry for it, because I take an unusual interest in this woman—a young, pretty, haughty woman, whose eyes flash strangely sometimes (*he turns, and sees her standing in the doorway, in the background*). Ah, Madame, come in; I am very happy to see you again (*he goes to her, and leads her to the center. She accompanies him rather unconcernedly*).

Hauteux. Your welcome seems to be very cordial, Mr. True—and so you still remember me?

True. Indeed, Madame, I shall always remember you, and though you have moved away to Metz, you shall often find me there, be sure of that.

Hauteux. Perhaps I shall—when occasion brings you thither.

True. And meantime, I shall take great care of what you gave me—the portrait, which is hanging over the mantle in the dining room.

Hauteux. Indeed!—*That* is complimentary (*with some surprise*).

True. And when I walk before it, to and fro, its conscious eyes look down, and seem to follow me like living eyes.

Hauteux. It must be unpleasant. I do not like to be watched even by a portrait (*True pauses a moment in thought*).

True. No. It makes one feel as though his secret thoughts were passing under scrutiny, and so, in spite of us, the critic over the mantle wields an actual influence.

Hauteux. Critic?—Ah, yes, *I* understand you. That is rather sentimental, I think; but it is easily accounted for—when one remembers how greatly you have changed in two short weeks.

True. Changed!—Oh, no, Madame, I think I have remained the same throughout: I am still thoroughly American.*

Hauteux. Yes—thoroughly.—'Twas yesterday, I believe, that I heard a strange report about you on the streets—yesterday!

True. About me? (*reflects*) Now you call it to my mind. You have heard, no doubt, of the success of my play at the theatre. Well, Madame, to be candid with you, *it was* strange.

Hauteux. You think it was?—(*after a pause*) Well, perhaps your merits entitle you to succeed.—Ah! I see: you have been reading my letter. That is strange! Did it *surprise* you?

True. I may say it did, Madame; but it was a very pleasant surprise from an old friend, and you are always welcome here. You are happy in time to-night for the ceremony, too.

Hauteux. That is fortunate, indeed. It is well I came; I would not have missed it.—Where is she—this—young bride?—Is she present? Or do you *permit* anyone to see her?

True. Anyone, Madame (*takes her hand: she rises with alacrity*). Come with me, and I will introduce you at once to Adrian Marcelle—

Hauteux. Ah! Adrian?

True. That is her name. Now, Madame, let us walk in here and see her together.

Hauteux. I shall make use of the opportunity, Mr. True; but you need not come; there is hardly any need of it (*exit*)

True (*pained*). She treats me very coldly!—I deserve it.—It is all because I did not invite her to this wedding. I should have done so: it was wrong in me—*wrong* to neglect her after all her months of kindness to me. I will *not* be mean! 1

* As will be seen further on, True was for a number of years the Paris correspondent of an American journal—who subsequently became a dramatist in a foreign land. This, I confess, is a stretch of the imagination, when it is remembered that an American can scarcely become a dramatist in his own country.

will go and apologize at once (*goes toward the door. The bell rings*) Ah! there is the bell. Who can that be? (*calls*) Nellie! Nellie! (*Nell enters*) Run to the door and see who that is. (*exit Nell*) Some visitor coming here? That is ominous, inauspicious. What am I to do? I can't postpone this ceremony till the morning (*Nell enters and delivers a card*). "Lieut. Frank Clair, of the National Guards." What can he want in Paris so early after the war?—Nell, show him in (*exit Nell*). He is my brother-in-law, and I shall now hear news of the whereabouts of my sister.

ENTER LIEUT. FRANK CLAIR.—NELL RETIRES.

Ah, Lieutenant, this is a warrior's return. What brings you back to Paris?

Clair. Off duty, Sheridan, off duty. The war has closed at last, and France is now shaking the dust from off her ruffled plumage. Oh, those Prussians—cold, dull, and plethoric, as you say—are a deception and a snare, my friend: they move swiftly enough when there is occasion for it.

True. I am glad to see that you have a better opinion of them now than you had before.

Clair. My sentiments *have* been modified somewhat by experience.—But, sir, have you not moved into a very secluded part of Paris? I have been at my wits' end to find your residence.

True. Yes. I have moved since last we met. This is my home.

Clair (looking at him inquisitively). Yours? Aha?—It is very cozy, indeed, for a bachelor. And now, Sheridan, tell me, where is my wife, your sister?

True. Your wife? I do not understand you.

Clair. Yes, my wife. I have been half distracted with grief for months.

True. You do not mean to tell me, Lieutenant, that your wife has been separated from you during the war? Come, come—

Clair. I do! Have you *no* information to give me?

True. None. I expected that of you. You surprise me. Over a year ago you married my sister Lillian, and since then I have not been able to learn anything of her.

Clair. Nor I: not a solitary word have I heard. Why you remember it well. We were married at the *salon* of Madame Hauteux more than a year ago. Three months afterwards, we went to Metz, on a travelling tour, and while there, the war broke out. I was at once made an officer in the French army, and leaving my wife in Metz, as I thought, for a week or two, I went on duty near the lines. A band of Prussian skirmishers surprised us, and I was taken prisoner, only a few days after my departure. All communications were cut off, and it was three months before I was able to return to Metz. But she was gone! I plunged again into the war to drown my wretchedness in the din of battle, and here am I once more in Paris, in quest of the woman who has so mysteriously disappeared.

True. That is a touching story, Lieutenant. It sounds like a dream.

Clair. Not a dream, a nightmare.

True. But cheer up: dream or nightmare, it will pass away as all dreams do, and give place to happiness and reality. We shall find her bye-and-bye, and I shall help you.—Tonight, Lieutenant, you are fortunate enough to be in time to witness an episode in my own life.

Clair. An episode in your life? Anything remarkable, Sheridan?

True. Yes, rather remarkable. Do you notice these flowers, and the tasteful setting of the parlor? What—well, what do you suppose has caused this transformation scene?

Clair (after due reflection). A woman!—Oh, Sheridan!—

True (aside). He seems to be surprised. How will my friends take it?

Clair. Where is she? I can't believe all this. (*they withdraw*)

into the background, while Adrian enters).

Adrian (advancing). What a strange, weird story she has been telling me! It makes me shiver to think of it (*falls to thinking*).

True (aside to Clair). Do you recognize her?

Clair. I do. She lived in Paris up to a year ago, and then went to Metz.

True. Go and talk to her Lieutenant, till I return (*exit*).

Adrian. And her eyes—how strangely they flash! I wonder what it all means?

Clair (advancing). You do not remember me, Miss Adrian?

Adrian. Oh, yes, Mr. Clair, I remember you well. I am happy to see you safe in Paris again.

Clair. Lieutenant Clair, since last we met, Miss Adrian.

Adrian. Ah, a Lieutenant?—What is it brings you to Paris again? (*At this point, the Rev. Mr. Dimitry appears in the doorway in the background for a moment or two. Not wishing to interrupt, he retires.*)

Clair. Everything, to be brief.

Adrian. And of course you have brought Lillian with you?

Clair. No, I have not. She was last in Metz—

Adrian. In Metz? She might have called on me, I am sure.

Clair. I wish she had, Miss Adrian; but I dare say she did not know you lived there, and she has never met you. It would have been a happy thing for me, indeed, if she had. Strange things happen sometimes in every one's experience, and, to-night, there is, I believe, a vein of romance in your own life, Miss Adrian. I judge, for instance, that your uncle, George Marcelle, will not be present at your wedding-to-night.

Adrian. No, he will not be. You know him well: he is bigoted, he is fanatical, he loves no creed save that of Rome, and hates the name American—and I—

Clair. Love an American. There's the rub. Well, marry the man of your choice, whether his native land be France or

free America. I see it all: you have left your uncle at home, Miss Adrian. Come, do not cast your eyes down, but be merry on your wedding night.

Adrian. I am merry, Lieutenant—I think I am.

Clair. At any rate, you shall be presently. This must not only be a union, but a reunion. There! let us walk, Miss Adrian, and recall former pleasant incidents together (*exeunt*).

Maurice (*Thrusting his head in at the door, and looking around.*) I saw them go in! They are married I warrant. (*pceps in at another door*). I wonder if they have had supper yet (*listens*). Not a sound from the table. All is still, even the gurgling of wine (*whispers so as to be heard*). Nell, oh Nell, I am tired of waiting at the garden gate. But I'll be there, Nell, I'll be there. So bring the wedding cake, please (*exit*).

ENTER NELL.

Nell. I am sure I heard somebody whisper. "Nell, Nell," is ringing in my ears.—Oh! it was that wretched Maurice, with more curiosity than a woman has. (*looking out*) I wonder if it was not Maurice? I really do not care a straw about it one way or the other—only I should like to know (*across the stage, outside the door, the Rev. Mr. Dimitry is seen to pass slowly*). There he is at last! I will warn Mr. True. (*goes to a door, as True enters*).

ENTER TRUE IN FULL DRESS.

True (*talking rapidly*). Everything is ready, and I am in glorious spirits. Now Nell—Ah! there is the bell again. Another visitor! Run and see who it is (*exit Nell*). Another, and another and another! It seems to me I am not to be married at all to-night—merely because of the front-door bell. And if it should be the old gentleman himself—what a pandemonium there might be!—For the sake of domestic tranquillity I hope it is not (*listening*). No, it is some one else. It is—(*innocently*) Who is it, Nell? (*Nell enters, bearing in her arms a little child.*)

Nell. Oh, Mr. True, what a pretty little child!

True (with frank surprise). A little child?—Ah, yes! where did he come from, Nellie?

Nell. Why a lady at the gate requested me to bring him in, and present him to you!

True (astonished, but pleased). To me?—As a wedding gift?

Nell. I suppose so, sir.

True (touching him quaintly). Why, he's alive, Nell! Isn't he?

Nell. Yes, sir.—How beautiful he is, Mr. True!

True. And how calm and happy he looks! I wish I were as happy, Nell, but I am not.—No, no, you must take him back, and tell the lady it is a mistake.

Nell. Very well, sir, I will go. (*exit*)

True. Whee ugh! The night is getting romantic—extremely romantic. I shall be a hero before morning, and yet I feel unpleasantly heroic already. This is a compliment to me, extraordinary compliment, but I am unworthy of it. (*sees Madame Hauteux entering.*) Well, Madame, I hope you like my new residence?

Hauteux. Oh, yes—quite well.—Look at the pictures. (*points at the wall*) You have numbers of them. I like them more than anything I have seen, except—

True. Adrian.

Hauteux. Yes. I am very fond of her already.—But did you not say she came from Metz? (*reflects*) Ah, yes, I remember; you did say so. Where is she now?—or shall I bring her in for you?

True. If you please, Madame. (*she goes to a door at once, stops there a moment, and then returns suddenly.*)

Hauteux. Do you really wish me to bring her in?

True. It will trouble you, perhaps. Let me go myself—

Hauteux (positively). No!—You shall not! I will do so myself. I do not wish her to stay by herself! (*exit*),

True. She seems to be engrossed with me at present. I am glad of it: She is too sensible to be—Who is this again?

RE-ENTER NELL with the child in her arms

Nell. Oh, Mr. True, she is gone!—I cannot find her anywhere.

True. Gone, Nell? (*reflects a moment, and then laughs pleasantly*)

Oh, well, just take the little fellow into yonder room—not there!—Heavens! Adrian is there—and Nell, be sure you treat him like a prince, you hear? (*exit Nell*) If I can be married before this unexpected visitor—this uninvited guest—is discovered, I shall feel secure and easy. No doubt some eccentric woman, with a trace of madness in her composition, is laboring under the delusion that I am wealthy. And now I may as well brace up for the ceremony. I wonder how I look in this awkward costume? (*goes before a mirror*) That is all right. Now for those marriage forms. (*runs over them aloud*) “Will you take this wedded wife to be your—this husband to be your—no, this woman to be your wedded wife? I will.” I have actually forgotten the marriage forms! They are coming—Adrian and Clair. Where is that book of mine—that “Discipline,” or “Ritual,” or what not? I will glance over it. (*turns over the pages rapidly*). Here it is. (*at this point, Adrian and Clair enter and remain in the background, accompanied by Nell, and Dimitry, who stand in the doorway. This done, Madame Hauteux enters from the room in which the child is supposed to be. She throws the door open, and by a sudden, significant action, directs Adrian’s gaze upon the child.*)

Adrian (*going quickly to the door—aside*). A child!—Oh, Madame—bring it here! (*Hauteux does so instantly*).

Hauteux. Oh, Mr. True, whose child is this? See! take him in your arms! (*True does so artlessly*.)

Adrian (*aside*). Oh, what shall I do? (*looks despairingly at Madame Hauteux. True stands facing the audience—with an expression of profound bewilderment upon his countenance, untroubled by suspicion. He appears to be in thought; then he casts his eyes down, and smiles upon the child in his arms. He turns half round, and meets Adrian’s gaze*.)

True (instantly fathoming her thoughts). Oh, Adrian, do not leave me! (*Clair stands off a distance, looking calmly on*)

Adrian (seizing a note in the child's bosom). Sheridan True's—child!—Oh, how—have you—betrayed—me! Will you—not speak? (*She appears dazed: Dimitry advances.*)

Dimitry (to both calmly). To marry you under these circumstances would be an injustice to one, if not to both. It cannot be! (*to Adrian*) Go, my dear, (*she hesitates*) I counsel you, go! (*exit Adrian. Dimitry follows. True gives the child to Nell, who retires into the next room*)

True. Stay, Adrian, stay!

Clair (restraining him) You must stay! She is a lady, and I take her part. Speak! (*draws: Hauteux intervenes*)

True. I know not what to call it but an infamous blackmail!

Clair. Ah, Sheridan, Sheridan, speak out!

True (quietly). No, not for you! You are not my judge, but rather a false and treacherous friend! (*goes toward him: Madame Hauteux intervenes.*)

Hauteux (to Clair). Go!—You must! (*Clair bows to Hauteux, and departs.*)

True (turning to Madame Hauteux and smiling pleasantly). Ah, Madame, through all my troubles, you are still my friend!

[CURTAIN.]

ACT II.

SCENE—An apartment in Madame Hauteux' house, Metz.

TIME: Four weeks later.

ENTER MAURICE *with a nosegay in his hand. He goes to a door and peeps in.*

Maurice. There she is. There's Nell.—aesthetic Nell. There they all are—except Adrian, who has never been heard from. Off she went, like a flash; but she loves him still, I warrant. She can't help it. Poor girl! she wasn't wrong, and she wasn't right: she was both, perhaps. I've a notion to toss this nosegay into the room.—No! (*goes to the mantle and takes up a small vase*) It is *her* little vase, all empty, too. I will crown it with a bunch of violets and a rose. It's for Nell. (*exit*)

ENTER TRUE, *with the child in his arms. He goes to a rocking chair.*

True. Well, well, well—hush, sir!—(*looking up.*) Here we are!—I have him still—and he has me! He weighs just fifteen pounds, but he is the most animated fifteen pounds I have ever carried. He's alive all over.—But he's a nice little fellow for all that, just as happy as if he were at home among his friends, and with his mother's arms about him. I wonder who owns him? No one knows, and no one claims him; but if he has a mother, I will keep him safely till she comes again. (*he lays his head on the child's breast and listens*) There! His heart is right here, and I can hear it beating! I hope it will beat a long, long time. We will put on his coat for him—is that the name? (*in putting it on the child, he thrusts the right arm into the left sleeve, and pauses in perplexity.*) Come, Nell, it is your turn now.—(*despairingly*) Oh, Nell! (*sees Madame Hauteux entering*) Ah, Madame, 'tis you. Will Nell never come? (*Nell enters*)

Hauteux. Come?—Ah, yes—there she is!—(*aside*) He actually loves that child! (*walks about restlessly*)

True. Nell, you may take him away for awhile. He will be a great man one of these days.

Nell (taking him). Oh, I hope he will! But what shall I call him, Mr. True?

True. Call him?—(*gleefully*) Oh, yes, we must name him. Madame, suggest a name. How can he get along in the world without one?

Hauteux. Are you really going to do *that*?—Oh, well, it matters little after all. Call him any pretty name you wish.

True (suddenly). Oh, by the way, Nell, is he a girl or a boy?

Nell. Oh, Mr. True!—He's a boy, of course. (*True pauses in thought.*)

True. Now then we have it, Madame, we have it at last. I shall name him SHERIDAN TRUE JR., out of compliment to him! Now, Nell, go at once and buy him a new rattle!

Nell. Very well, sir, I will go.—Four weeks ago he came to us in Paris, and to-day he is with us in Metz, and no doubt he has come to stay. (*exit*)

True. So he has; he is one of those visitors that “drop in” occasionally to stay. He is welcome, too, Madame, is he not?

Hauteux. I am sure, Mr. True, that *you* are always welcome here. (*sits down*)

True. You know, of course, what brought me here, but tell me, why should you leave home and friends, and come to Metz?

Hauteux. I?—Such strange questions you ask! I have never been fond of Paris particularly. Metz is far better. (*True appears surprised at this statement.*) And then my friends—as you call them—departed, every one: why, not even *you* remained.

True. How could I? I should never have left your place, but for very urgent reasons. You know them well. (*smiling*) I intended to occupy a house of my own, not far from yours;

but some malicious woman, half demented, perhaps, overturned my plans, and left me as I was—a bachelor.

Hauteux. Demented? Mad, you mean? (*she looks around uneasily*) You only guess so?—I am almost glad of your mishap—

True. Glad? Why, Madame?

Hauteux. Because it shows you what they are. Surely you remember the day? It was—strange! I have forgotten it.—But they forsook you at once, both Lieutenant Clair and Adrian. The former drew his sword against your life, and the latter did not love you well enough to trust you.

True. Do you really think so, Madame?

Hauteux. Think so?—That is a strange question to ask!—Well, if she loved you, she would return. You have waited: you have called her long and loud, but she does not answer. No, no, she remains away; she does not trust *herself* in the open streets where you can find her. Am I not right?

True. Do not speak so, Madame! Come, be just. She is young and thoughtless. Say you love her then, will you not? (*takes her hand impassionately.*) Speak, you do not dislike her, do you? Do you love her then?

Hauteux (softly but pungently). No, I cannot! (*goes to a door, then turns, and looks back with evident displeasure.*)

True (going to her). Oh, Madame, have you forsaken me, too?

Hauteux. No—not yet!—How can one like her *now*? How can you? She is a good girl, an excellent girl—only—I do not know why she stays away! (*exit*)

True. Her manner is strange, and yet she is always positive. Her reasons are strong, I admit, but I cannot accept them. Here comes some one. It is Jerrold Quiz, the one-eyed landlord. Well, my friend, how is that left eye of yours?

ENTER JERROLD QUIZ.

Jerrold. No better, can't see out of it. (*walks off a distance*) Now I can't even see you with it. In fact, Mr. Sheridan, my right eye is the only one I have left.

True. You have a confusion of sight then, or of mind? Which is it? (*they sit down*)

Jerrold. Now don't make merry at an old man like me, Mr. Sheridan. See here: this letter was left here for you awhile ago.

True. It is in answer to the one I wrote. It relates to the difficulty with Lieut. Clair, who, I see has been ill.

Jerrold. Who is he, Mr. Sheridan?

True. He was formerly a friend of mine, but now an enemy. You will see him here to-day at twelve.

Jerrold (aside). He can't live in Metz; I never heard of him.— Well, sir, how is the little boy?

True. So far, Jerrold, he has escaped the croup remarkably well, but he isn't in good trim ~~this~~ morning. He is very fretful. Do you like him?

Jerrold. I like little children—been with them all my life. How old is your boy, Mr. Sheridan?—Now don't think hard of me, I'm only getting acquainted with you.

True. Sheridan True Jr. is—really, Jerrold, your question is simple enough, but I can't answer it. I have no family Bible.

Jerrold. No record of his age then? Well, well, well—

True. None at all. Singular, isn't it?

Jerrold. So it is. It's a pity.

True. And no one knows anything about him, either. He was given to me, Jerrold.

Jerrold. Given to you? (*Jerrold falls to thinking*) He wasn't born in Metz, that's certain. I would have heard of it. (*aside*)

True. And judging by his countenance, you would think him a very innocent little fellow, wouldn't you?

Jerrold. In all conscience, he's innocent enough, Mr. Sheridan.

True. But he isn't, he isn't at all. He broke up a nice little family gathering sometime ago. (*Jerrold again falls to meditating*) Now wasn't he an appropriate present for a bachelor?

Jerrold (drawing up close). Mr. Sheridan, where did you come

from? Now don't think hard of me -I'm just getting acquainted with you.

True. Jerrold, don't let me lead you into a discussion of this kind, unless you feel so disposed; still you appear to have an appetite for news this morning.

Jerrold. So I have. But I'm a deep man, Mr. Sheridan. I know all the news in Metz, and half the people, too.

True (suddenly). Ah, you do?—Well, then, years ago I came to Paris with my sister, Lillian True, as the correspondent of an American journal. I was often in the company of actors and actresses, and when the journal for which I wrote changed hands, I turned my attention to the drama. Journalists often do that. It is very natural, too; they have more ups and downs, and more temptations to do wrong than anybody else. To-day four weeks ago, I had the courage to present my piece before the assembled critics of Paris, but the evening passed off pleasantly, and it was a success. This quite took my breath away, because, being an American, I had no idea that the play would succeed. Success in one thing, however, does not portend success in another; and so a few evenings later, when there was to be a wedding at my house, I met with trouble and misfortune. On the very night of the ceremony, some one made me a present of young Sheridan True; my friends turned against me, and even my bride forgot her promise, and returned to Metz. There's the story in a nut-shell.

Jerrold. Mr. Sheridan, it isn't in my line to ask questions every minute, so don't think hard of me if I do. What is the lady's name, say you, sir?

True. Adrian Marcelle, Jerrold.

Jerrold. And your sister's name, say you?

True. Her name is Lillian.

Jerrold. Very well, Mr. Sheridan, if they are in Metz—as you think they are—I will find them both. I know all the news around, and half the people, too. So cheer up.

True (who was not expecting this, looks at the old man thoughtfully, and smiles). Now, Jerrold, I did not expect this of you. I have left nothing undone to find them both, and you must not suffer your good nature to get the better of your strength or judgment.

Jerrold. Ah, never mind, Mr. Sheridan, I thought you were in trouble, and I am happier when I can help somebody. So come with me. Ah!

ENTER NELL *quickly.*

Nell. Oh, Mr. True, you must come and see him. I believe he is ill.

True. Ill!—Is he ill?—I knew there was something wrong. Now what shall I do?

Jerrold. Just leave it all to me, Mr. Sheridan; leave it all to me. (*exit True*)

Nell. Isn't it dreadful? I know nothing about sickness. What shall I do?

Jerrold. Keep quiet. I will see the child myself. (*the door opens and Maurice appears. A sudden thought strikes Jerrold*) Ah, come here, will you? (*they go aside to talk.*)

Nell. It is Maurice, lovely Maurice! I wonder if he knows I am standing here?—A nosegay! he brought it, I know. I will wear it for him. There! he is gone! I don't care. (*to Jerrold*) Now what did you do that for? (*suddenly*) Oh, nothing! (*exit*).

Jerrold (puzzled). Nothing?—I've thought of a plan—(*smiles complacently*) a deep plan. Only yesterday—who is there? (*some one knocks at the door, Jerrold opens it*). Well, who is this young lady? (*aside*).

ENTER ADRIAN MARCELLE *in black.*

Adrian. Good evening, sir. Does Mr. Jerrold Quiz live here?

Jerrold. Mr. Quiz lives here, ma'am.

Adrian. Who are you, pray? Pardon my curiosity.

Jerrold. I am he, ma'am, Jerrold Quiz. (*Jerrold grows interested and regards her with evident curiosity.*)

Adrian. Ah, yes. You answer the description I have of you. I am from the hospital just now, Mr. Quiz, where there are so many sick soldiers. I have been there sometime. A friend of yours, employed there, a Mrs. Constance, (*Jerrold nods assent*) sent me hither to make arrangements with you for a room.

Jerrold. A room?

Adrian. Yes; I like this one: is it occupied?

Jerrold. All this upper part, ma'am, belongs to Madame Hauteux, and this room is occupied by a gentleman, Mr. Sheridan True—

Adrian. Oh, how you frightened me! (*she remains nervous.*)

Jerrold. Frightened you?—No, no, there is nothing in Jerrold Quiz to scare anybody. Come now, no more noise. There's a child sick in the next room.

Adrian. A child?—Ah, me!—(*suddenly.*) Tell me, who nurses it?

Jerrold (aside). That's queer—very queer—Well, ma'am, I have just sent to the Convent for a nurse, in case of need. They are good and trusty, those people.

Adrian. You have? To the Convent? That's strange: why didn't you send for a physician? However, I'll not ask. (*rising*) I am sorry I cannot remain here longer. I must go. Good evening, sir. (*exit*)

Jerrold (puzzled and mystified). As sure as I live, that woman is out of her mind. She shows it: clear symptoms, too. She said "good evening" twice, in ten minutes. Now everybody knows it isn't evening at all, it is morning. She never took her eyes off me once. Poor girl! she was quick to advise physic for us, but not for herself. It isn't physic we want; it is nursing. Nature and the nurses work more cures than the doctors, I know it. I've lived in a hospital long enough—

True (thrusting his head in at the door). Oh, Jerrold, Jerrold!

Jerrold. Mr. True is all in a flutter. It's natural: he's never had experience. Let me see what I can do to quiet him. (*exit*)

ENTER MADAME HAUTEUX. *She looks back into the room.*

Hauteux. He is shunning me! He speaks not a word of hope. There! I saw him press a kiss upon its cheek! I know he loves it now: he bends over it so tenderly. It *must* be sent from here, and quickly, too. (*jealously*) Loves it! (*advances uneasily*) What is this he is doing? Turning away? Repelling me? Yes! It makes me shudder.—Oh, I wish he were dead, or gone from here!—Gone? (*reflects*)—Ah, yes! if we part, this suffering will cease, these hours of melancholy go—and I'll not sink beneath the reach of sympathy. Go!—He must! I cannot long live here: it grows intolerable! I'll drive him hence, and then the doors of my heart will open, and Love and Hate will take their flight together. (*suddenly*) And yet he is my guest—my welcome, *hated* guest, who fills my heart with care.—Then let him go—let the child go with him, and let all he loves go follow him down the stairway into the streets of Metz! (*Nell enters*) Nell, tell your master I would see him here. Go quickly! (*exit Nell*) And who are you? (*sees Adrian entering, in black. She has a heavy convent veil over her face,*) Ah! do not recoil, Madame. 'Tis but a woman speaking to you. Come, you are silent. Tell me who you are. You have *no* name?—Whisper then; I will let nobody hear it.—You provoke me, Madame! Then say what brought you here. Speak!

Adrian. *Sickness!*—

Hauteux. Ah, yes, I see it now: you are one of the nurses from the hospital. 'Tis well you came: Sheridan True's child is very ill. Ah! take care. (*catches her*) You would have tripped yourself and fallen. Let me take you in my arms. (*does so*) How tremulous you are! So slight! You are young—too young to pass your life in a convent. Perhaps you have a brother sick in the hospital, or dying of a wound

received in battle.—Or perhaps you nurse the dying soldiers of the French army? That is kind of you, and gentle.—How I long to see your eyes, Madame! Are they blue or hazel?—Let me see! quick! lift your veil! *I will kiss you!* (*Adrian hides her face in her hands*).

ENTER TRUE *unobserved*.

True. Come, Madame, let me show her in. (*does so, and returns, after a pause at the door.*)

Hauteux (*half aside*). There! see how he treats me! He does not even ask me to go with him. He is always slighting me!

True. Is she not rather delicate for a nurse, Madame?

Hauteux. Delicate? Yes, and too young! You had better send her away. Come, I will do so for you—

True. No, not yet, Madame. 'Tis the best I can do. The experienced nurses are all in the hospitals, and the doctors—(*suddenly*) had'n't I better—

Hauteux (*quickly*). I will help her. She may make some error. I will watch her closely. Let me go!

True. Stay. you wished to see me.

Hauteux. I?—No! no!—I do not want you. Release me. Let me go.

True. Not now: I will, when you are more composed. Speak to me, Madame: what is it agitates you so? Are you troubled? You must not repel me. No, no; come, tell me all about yourself, while there's no one here. I will listen to your story, I will help you; I am not far off, Madame, but close to you. Come, you must! You know I have ever—loved you. (*her face lights up suddenly*)

Hauteux. No, I have nothing to tell you. Do you not see I am quite composed and prudent? You are detaining me. Let me go. (*exit*)

True. It is useless: I can do nothing with her. She is like a leaf caught up by the wind and driven hither and thither by its violence. She loves me, I am sure, and would die for

me. There's the pain of it. Was ever a bachelor in such a state of trouble? I wonder what I can do for her?—I will leave this place: that's best, perhaps. She will then forget me—but—suppose she isn't in love with me? I wonder if she is? What should have cast a gloom over her so suddenly?—I have known her a long time, I will be frank and ask her. (*goes toward a door*) It is impossible! She knows I am to be married. There is something else the matter. And yet, what do all these kindnesses mean?—Oh, it is mysterious! I *must* know; I would not hurt her for all the world (*Jerrold enters*). Well, Jerrold, what is the matter? The nurse incompetent?

Jerrold. I think the girl's too nervous; I'll put on my hat—

True. Wait! I will go for the doctor myself. Why didn't you tell me of this before? You are old enough to know better. (*Jerrold winces.*)

Jerrold. Don't scold, Mr. Sheridan, don't scold. There's nothing the matter.

True. Nothing? What do you mean, then, by hurrying off in that manner?

Jerrold. I tell you, Mr. Sheridan, there's nothing wrong, nothing at all. I was at his bedside just now, and the moment he saw me, sir, he winked *this* eye first, and then he winked *this* one. That's a good sign, Mr. Sheridan!

True. You mean, Jerrold, it is a sign of life?

Jerrold. Oh, he's alive, sir. Wait till night comes!

True. The tones of your voice are full of foreboding. I shall trouble myself no more about it, then. He was alive last night; he was distressingly alive. If my friends could have seen me pacing the floor at 1 A. M., trying to sing the melodies of "Mother Goose," they would not have been moved to laughter: they would have marvelled at my heroism. And, Jerrold, I want you to do a favor for me—if you can.

Jerrold. What is it, Mr. Sheridan?

True. Come and sit up with me to-night. I like to hear you talk.

Jerrold. Which I will do, sir, if I can.—I will go now, and make those inquiries for you, and if the women are here in Metz, you'll hear of it by to-morrow. (*exit*)

True. I shall make friends at every tick of the clock. (*Maurice enters with a letter*) What is it, Maurice? A letter?

Maurice. There's not a nurse to be found in Metz, Mr. True; but I have brought a letter for you. (*delivers it.*)

True (after a pause). Oh, never mind about that. I am satisfied with Jerrold's management. (*looks at the address on the letter*) There is something the matter in Paris, I know it. There is a storm gathering overhead, I know it. There is something harrowing in this letter, too, I know it. Let me see—from Manager Miles of the "Comique: (*reads*)

"*My Dear Sir:*

"Why is it you do not return to Paris and attend to the pressing demands of business? There is imperative necessity of your doing so at once. The people whom you engaged to present your drama at the 'Comique,' are greatly astonished that you should be absent from the theatre at this time, and your friends here are at a loss to account for your peculiar eccentricities. There are strange rumors afloat"—rumors about me? What can they be?—"and I regret to say that your name is already connected with a malicious scandal, which the newspapers will get hold of in a few days"—Scandal! what does that mean?—"I am doing my utmost to suppress it, but it is nearly impossible to baffle the curiosity of the reporters, who are coming to me every day for a sketch of your life."—Reporters! may justice seize them!—"Now do not let this letter alarm you, or make you feel uneasy, as it is not intended to cause you any anxiety."—On the contrary, he could not have written me a more comforting epistle.—"Let me beg of you, therefore, to return at once, and explain these matters to the satisfaction of your friends.

If you are not here pretty soon, I shall send a mutual friend, Fenton Frere, to see you in Metz, in behalf of my interests.

“Yours sincerely,

“RODERICK MILES,

“Man. Thea. Com., Paris.”

“P. S.—After writing the above letter, I have been informed that you were married sometime ago. Many congratulations.

“MILES.”

This is horrible! Scandal! Married! How did this rumor—it is horrible to think of!—At night I have no rest, and in the daytime—in the few lucid moments I have—I am puzzled, perplexed, and vexed by letters like this! Who could have originated such a rumor? (*Maurice winces*) Go, Maurice, there is some one at the bell down stairs. I suspect it is Mr. Frere: keep him down there for a few minutes (*exit Maurice*) till I can collect my thoughts.—I *must* return to Paris immediately: I have been off for days and days without giving a solitary word of explanation. I’ll go—but Adrian!—What shall become of her? If she only knew how much misery I have endured for her sake—if she only knew how ridiculous I have been, and am likely to be for a decade to come—(*Adrian enters*) Ah, Madame, pardon me, I did not know you were so near. Be seated, please, just for a moment. I am resolved to return to Paris. and you must accompany me. I am positive: you must. I shall go now and see that everything is put in readiness for the journey. (*exit*) Adrian (*crying*). Oh—oh—he—he—is going—away!—I—I—will—go with—him! Yes—I—I—*will* go—and speak to him like a noble woman. There! (*lifts her veil*) Ah! Madame Hauteux! do not be harsh to me.

Hauteux (entering). Adrian Marcelle! (*half-aside*) She came to watch us!—Come, you must go. (*takes her by the hand*) You are not welcome here.

Adrian. Please, Madame, do not drive me hence. I have no

home, no friends. Oh, let me go! I must see him!

Hauteux. Nay, you cannot enter there! I will not have it.

'Twould be sad for both of us.

Adrian. I cannot believe it. I have seen him with my own eyes: he is noble and I must see him!

Hauteux. Will you rush into his arms? Nay, you shall not!

You must leave at once. Come—

Adrian. Why, why are you so interested in me?

Hauteux. Interested? Ah, yes! I will tell you. Whose place is this? and who am I? Do you know?

Adrian. I do not understand you.

Hauteux. Strange! Whose child is this? And why does he name it for himself?

Adrian. Ah, me! My heart is broken.—Oh, speak, Madame, who is its mother?

Hauteux (after a pause). Do you not know?

Adrian. You!—(*she turns away*). Oh, let me go! Open the door—and let me go! I am satisfied.

Hauteux (takes her by the hand). Come, let us hurry. I fear something dreadful. (*suddenly with fear*) Did you not hear that noise? (*a coin falls upon the floor*).

Adrian—There, Madame! I have dropped all my money. (*she hesitates*)

Hauteux. Nay! You cannot stop to find it! Come! (*draws a purse from her pocket*). There! take it. It is a purse full of money. Go now, and never return! (*exit*

Adrian. *Hauteux* looks around irresolutely for a moment; then suddenly with fear). Oh, the child! the child! It is still here! What peril under my roof!—Send it away then!—Yes, this very moment! It stands like ice between us now—it alone! (*goes quickly to a door and opens it. She recoils*). Ah! they are there! How can I? They will suspect me. They are watching me closely; they are all watching me! Have I no disguise? I cannot have it here

another hour. It must be sent away somewhere, anywhere
—(*True enters : she grows calm at once.*)

True. Ah, she is gone.

Hauteux (reflects). Gone?—Who?

True. The lady.

Hauteux. Ah, yes, *I* understand. You want her?—Why, then, I will go at once and call her! (*he restrains her*) Oh, no, it is no trouble! (*aside from True*) I will follow her to see whither she is going. I *know* she isn't going away! (*exit*).

True. Off she goes again, without a reason, or a word of explanation. I cannot understand her: she has been wholly different heretofore.—Well, Maurice—

ENTER MAURICE.

Maurice. Here is that gentleman's card, sir. He is very impatient: he is stamping the floor down stairs.

True. Send him up. (*exit Maurice*) Fenton Frere, I knew it. He is a reporter on a dramatic paper. I shall now be served up in the newspapers. What a prospect ahead of me! It is exhilarating. He is coming, and I must act like a married man—if my tongue does not betray me.—Come in, Fenton, come in, and be seated (*goes to him and grasps his hand.*)

Fenton (in the door). Thank you, Sheridan, you are quite cordial, indeed. I hope this is no intrusion?

True. Not at all, not at all. You know very well, Fenton—

Fenton. Oh, yes, I know it all. Ha! ha! ha! who would have suspected it?—But, Sheridan, among all your friends, there is no one who will congratulate you more heartily than I! (*grasps his hand*)

True (merrily). Ha! ha!—ha!—ha!—Sit down, sit down. How do I look?

Fenton. You look sleepy, old fellow: so you do.—But what a strange idea it was for you to come to Metz to spend your honeymoon, without saying a word about it. Where is your wife? I don't see her here.

True. Well it was a strange notion, I must confess. (*parrying the question*) Have a cigar, Fenton?

Fenton. Thanks.—Now tell me, Sheridan, how do you like married life? Disappointed?

True. Yes—no! What am I thinking about? Really, Fenton, you must let me prevail upon you to try a glass of this sherry wine. Will you?

Fenton. Certainly. (*they go to a side-table and fill two glasses*) Have you another glass here, Sheridan?

True. Yes, here's one. What do you want with it?

Fenton (*fills it*). Now invite Mrs. True to join us, and introduce me at once.

True. Really, Fen—

Fenton. No refusal, Sheridan: I shall think hard of it.

True. Honestly, Fenton, she is not in.

Fenton. Ah! out visiting, perhaps? Sorry for that, sir. But here's to her health. I drink the odd glass to you. (*they drink*) Now, sir, if you have received Miles's letter, you know, of course, what brought me here. I come to bring you back per force. So tell me, first of all, when shall you return to Paris?

True. At once: that is, to-day.

Fenton. Very well, then, I shall send a telegram to Miles immediately, and let him know just when you expect to arrive in Paris.

True. Indeed!—Is it so important as that?

Fenton. Well, everybody is anxious about you. I am informed, too, that you will meet with a very cordial reception on your arrival—

True. A reception?

Fenton. Yes. Your friends have just heard of your marriage, and are going to meet you at the train in Paris.

True. They are? This is terrifying!

Fenton. How so?

True. Oh, no! what am I thinking about? Go on, Fen.

Fenton. And besides, Sheridan, there is something else on the programme—a sort of surprise, I believe, which they have in store for you to-morrow evening. But I am not at liberty to disclose it.

True. A surprise in store for me? That is singular.—Well, Nellie, what is it?

Nell (looking in). Mr. True, you must come at once. He is worse!

True. Worse? Now what shall I do?

Fenton. Who is worse?

True. Why the—er—pardon me, Fenton— (*beseechingly*)

Fenton. Certainly I will, Sheridan. I have but one word to say, in conclusion: Mr. Miles is the most anxious man in the world to see you back again: so don't forget your promise to return at once, and make the necessary changes in your drama. Good-bye, old fellow. I expect to call at your house to-morrow on a matter of great interest to you and your friends. (*exit*)

True. Gone! My head is in a whirl. Worse! Is it possible?—I must have a physician (*goes to a door, as Lieut. Clair enters*). Ah!—

Clair. 'Tis twelve o'clock, sir, the appointed hour.

True. I cannot meet you now.

Clair. But I insist. It must be now or never.

True. It shall be never then.—That you are here to meet me, is but a stroke of mine, Lieutenant. You stand within my doors——

Clair. Yours!—(*makes toward a door: True intervenes*)

True. No—you cannot!—You owe a duty to yourself, and to me. You should recognize it. You have brought misfortune on a woman who is near to me—my sister. You have injured and neglected her. You left her here in Metz without a friend: you forsook and forgot her——

Clair. No, Sheridan—

True. Do her justice then. Her safety was your first and

greatest duty. You loved her little when you wronged her so. Go then, and if she lives—

Clair. Lives!—Lives!—Oh, Sheridan, speak no more! I am sorry now. It was impulse, nothing else, that turned me thus against you, and made me such an enemy. But my heart is not estranged from you—and though I stifled all its generous promptings, and hushed the voice of duty for a time, I will strive against myself no longer.

True. Then, Lieutenant, we are friends once more. I knew you had a better face than the one you wore just now; and though you turned against yourself and drove out high impulses, that same perversity comes over all of us sometimes, and man is the enemy of his best thoughts.

[CURTAIN.]

ACT III.

SCENE—An apartment in True's House, Paris.

ENTER NELL.

Nell. Again in Paris! Well, I am glad of it: there is no pleasure for me in a wild-goose chase, such as we have had in Metz. What could have become of her? It is strange she should have disappeared so completely. Not a glimpse—who is that? (*sees Maurice entering*) Now, Maurice, what is it brings you back to Paris? It seems I can never get rid of you.

Maurice. Nor I of you, Nell. 'Tis hard, indeed, that we cannot get rid of each other. I left you here and went to Metz, but you followed me there.

Nell. I?—Indeed!—So you returned the compliment by following me to Paris—

Maurice. On important business.

Nell. Ah!

Maurice. Yes, Nell, I am to be married at last.

Nell. Oh, Maurice, is it that rich heiress?

Maurice. Yes, she is very rich—in good graces. (*puts an arm about her*)

Nell. Stop, do not do that! I am not an—heiress.

Maurice. I am sorry, Nell; but that counts little with me. I am plain, and will marry you as you are. Eh, Nell?

Nell. No, Maurice, I prefer to wait—

Maurice. But if I told you Jerrold Quiz, the landlord, sent me hither with a letter of great importance to Mr. Sheridan True and the baby—(*gives the letter*)

Nell. Perhaps.—Tell me, what does it contain?

Maurice. Glad tidings. Jerrold has found a clue at last—he *thinks*.

Nell. Oh, has he?—Tell me, Maurice—I love you so—where did the child come from?

Maurice (*puts an arm around her*). It came from—oh, Nell, if I could only have your promise—

Nell. You have it, *Maurice*—

Maurice. To marry me—

Nell. Oh!— Well—go on—

Maurice. I say, Nell, it came from—

ENTER SHERIDAN TRUE.

True. That will do for this evening, Nell. Now, *Maurice*, there is something at the train for you—(*Maurice brightens up*) some luggage of mine. Bring it here, and to-night you may take Nell back to Metz with you—

Nell. I won't! He will have to stay in Paris. (*exit Maurice gleefully*) Mr. True, I won't go back! (*wipes away a tear.*) Here are two letters, sir. (*delivers them*)

True. Two?—One of them bears the stamp of Paris, the other seems to be a note. (*puts the former into his pocket, and opens the latter leisurely*) Oh, Nell, how is my little cherub?

Nell. I think the trip has improved him very much, Mr. True. The doctor says so.

True. He does? Tell him to come here presently.

Nell. Yes, sir. (*goes to a door: then suddenly*) Oh, Mr. True, I had nearly forgotten to tell you: a little while ago a man brought a carriage here and a beautiful span of horses, and insisted on leaving them in the yard.

True. He did? Did he bring no message, or word of explanation?

Nell. No, sir. Perhaps one of those letters may clear up the matter. (*exit*)

True. I will see at once. (*reads the letter Maurice brought*). Why, this letter is signed by a Mrs. Positive, Matron of St. Therese Hospital, Metz! That is singular. Let us see:

“Dear Sir:

“This is the eighth letter that I have been under the necessity of writing to you in the past four weeks.” Eighth! She must have a strong admiration for me!—“It is unnecessary,

therefore, for me to repeat in this one the rules and advice which I gave you in the others, for your direction and guidance in ease of sickness and fretfulness."—What does she mean? Sickness and fretfulness?—"It is very strange, indeed, that you have kept silent so long, and have not taken the slightest trouble to answer any of them. I suppose you have cast them into the waste basket as trash, and thought no more about them. But you need not flatter yourself that I will let the matter drop without another word: you may rest assured that I will have an explanation of it costs me a trip to Paris."—This mysterious lady is very angry with me about something. Ah! here it is.—"For weeks and weeks you have not put pen on paper to this unfortunate woman, nor have you sent her a single franc to defray her expenses."—What unfortunate woman does she mean? "Instead, you have been perfectly silent, and nothing that I can do will draw the least response. Hoping that this letter will set you to thinking, etc., etc., etc.

"MRS. POSITIVE,

"Matron St. Therese Hospital, Metz."

This is the most mysterious missive I have ever received. If it were to fall into the hands of one of my friends, he would accuse me of carrying on a clandestine correspondence with the Matron of a hospital. (*Doctor Quiet enters*) Here is this other letter—ah, Doctor, come in. I have been wanting to see you. Tell me, what is the matter with this little child? Anything serious?

Quiet. Well—er—Mr. True—it doesn't amount to much. He has some fever, 'tis true, but—er—I'm inclined to think it will pass off after awhile. In fact, sir, I think you will discover the matter yourself bye-and bye.

True. You do?—Oh, no doubt of it. But—how long do you think it will take me to find it out?

Quiet. Well—er—a day or two will probably suffice, sir. Tell me, what portions of the country have you been sojourning

in lately ? No marshy district, I hope ?

True. No, no, Doctor, I have a great antipathy to swampy localities. Does that help you any ?

Quiet. Oh, I need no help, Mr. True, none at all. To be candid with you, I take it to be merely a complication of malaria with dentitis.

True. Ah, dentitis ?—(*aside*) What is that ?—Well, it seems to me that these complications of malaria are becoming rather frequent, not to say convenient, now-a-days.

Quiet. I may possibly agree with you, Mr. True. The advance of medicine has been very rapid in the past decade: the allopaths have given up the use of calomel almost entirely, and the homeopaths really give nothing to speak of. I should advise you, however, to procure a nurse at once. Where is the child's mother ?

True. A nurse ? Certainly, I shall attend to that to-day. Write me a prescrip—(*Quiet goes off aside*)

ENTER FENTON FRERE.

Fenton. Ah, Sheridan, here you are. Your friends are delighted to hear of your arrival, though I must confess they were somewhat surprised at not meeting you at the train.

True. They were ? I shall certainly do myself the justice to make them a full explanation after awhile.

Fenton. You must. They were coming here to see you this evening—

True. What !

Fenton. Yes. But, on reflection, I asked them not to do so, because I thought that you and Mrs. True would be too much fatigued after the journey to entertain them. But tell me, Sheridan, how did you like the present the "Bachelors' Club" made you ?

True. Present ? I don't understand you—

Fenton. Yes. Didn't you get my letter ?

True (*searches his pockets*). Oh, yes, I have it here in my pocket.

Fenton. Let me read a fragment of it for you. I am now the secretary of the "Club." (*reads*)

"Sheridan True, Esq.,

"Paris.

"Dear Sir :

"The members of the 'Bachelors' Club,' of which you have been the President for a number of years, having been apprised of your marriage, have made it my pleasurable duty to address you this letter of congratulation and good wishes. At our organization several years ago, you will remember that you incorporated into the constitution a law, that if a member dared to marry secretly, without the knowledge of his friends, he should, by way of retaliation, be at once expelled, and so, as this is the first opportunity that has presented itself to us, you will see at a glance how neatly your suggestion fits in—

True. They have expelled me from the "Club !"

Fenton. "But though we deeply regret that so excellent a fox has lost his tail," you may rest assured that we shall not part from you without giving you some substantial token of the high esteem in which you are held by your comrades—

True (suddenly). There ! you have come to it ! It is that carriage and span of horses. Whee ugh !—See here, Fenton, I shall have to acknowledge all this, and tell them how much Mrs. True will enjoy the riding.

Fenton. Certainly you will. You are not overwhelmed at the thought, I hope ?

True. Oh, no, it was rather unexpected.

Fenton. I am sorry, Sheridan, you do not appreciate our wedding present. I thought it was very appropriate: you have everything else in the world except that.

True. Fenton, I do not want to hear you talk that way ! I do appreciate it—very much.

Fenton (aside). He doesn't look like it.

True (aside). How meanly I feel ! Place a saint out of his sphere,

and he will develop into a demon—Is that all, Fen?

Fenton. No. Here is that surprise I spoke of in Metz. Look at this invitation. How do you like my design of the owl there as typical of the bachelor? Eh?

True (*opens it*). An invitation?—to a supper at the “Club” rooms this evening?—in *my* honor?

Fenton. Yes, a farewell supper to Sheridan True.

True. Oh, no, Fenton, oh, no!—It is out of the question. Why all this expense?

Fenton. Expense? You shock me. Do you suppose your friends intend to permit a matter of expense to debar them from giving the President the parting compliments of a supper?

True. But really, Fenton, I don’t deserve all this: my friends have been too kind to me already. Look at the magnificent present they have made me.

Fenton. That is nothing: they like you, and thought you would appreciate it. You must come by all means. There will be nobody there to-night except the members themselves, and two or three reporters besides myself.

True. Reporters!—And do you suppose I am going to make a confession before them?

Fenton. Confession? How?

True. Yes—no! I am thinking about something else.

Fenton. See here, Sheridan, what do you mean by these mysterious answers? I caught you doing the same thing in Metz.

True. I am growing absent-minded, I think. In fact, I have lost a great deal of sleep lately; you must excuse me.

Fenton. I will overlook it then: but promise me that you will not disappoint your friends to night.

True. I will. I promise you to be there.

Fenton. Bravo, old fellow, bravo! That is right.

True (*aside*). It is getting to close quarters, but I refuse to surrender.—Is that all, Fen?

Fenton. No I wish to ask you a question : what time shall I call by here for Mrs. True and yourself ?

True. Mrs. True ! Now, see here, Fenton, I prefer—(*Doctor Quiet comes near with the prescription : True sees an opportunity of parrying the question*). Ah, Doctor ! pardon me for this oversight. Doctor Quiet, allow me to introduce my friend, Mr. Fenton Frere (*they bow*).

Fenton. Really, Doctor, I hope there is nothing very serious the matter with Mrs. True ?

Quiet. Pardon me, Mr. Frere, it is not Mrs. True, as you suppose. It is a little child, sir.

Fenton. Ah, indeed ! (*regards Quiet critically for a moment, then turns and fixes his gaze upon True.*)

True (aside). It had to come ! I knew it.—Doctor, will you be kind enough to—step into the next room, and—er—see—what is going on in there ?

Quiet. Certainly I will, sir. Certainly (*exit*)

True. Fenton, have a chair.—(*aside*). I am going to unbosom myself.

Fenton. Anything wrong ?

True. Yes, something. In the past four weeks I have become an object of suspicion—you'll not abuse my confidence, old fellow ?

Fenton. Never, Sheridan.

True. An object of suspicion. Everything has gone wrong with me. I came to Paris to attend to matters of business, but at this very moment I feel as if I did not care particularly whether I became bankrupt or not.

Fenton. Is it possible you are regretting your marriage already ?

True. I have but one regret, Fenton, only one : and that is, that I am not married at all ! No, I'm not.

Fenton. Zounds !—Your friends have been positive of it.

True. Yes—distressingly positive. But to explain : On the night of—the—er—wedding, I was the recipient of a present from—a—female admirer. I have him in the next room.

This little fellow—several months old, perhaps—has been in the same boat with me for four weeks, and we have had a stormy voyage together.

Fenton. Ah!—It is blackmail then.—Why, Sheridan, I appreciate your position sincerely, and I am sure that there is not a friend of yours in Paris who would not defend the integrity of your character. But tell me, was this done for the purpose of extorting money from you?

True. No.—I have not paid a franc to any one.

Fenton. And a woman left it, you say?—Why, then, it is very simple: her intention was simply to break up your marriage. Don't you think so now?

True. You astonish me! As I have no enemy, that idea never occurred to me.

Fenton (after due reflection). A woman!—(suddenly) I think I know who she is.

True. Who? Speak, Fenton.

Fenton. No—you must excuse me.

True. But you must!

Fenton. I cannot! It is a mere suspicion, and you would never forgive me.

True. I would! Here is my hand.

Fenton. Well, Sheridan, I think the woman must have been demented. It is—eh?—no! I will not tell you. I may wrong Madame—

True (suddenly). Hush! You shall not breathe a syllable against her here! Retract those words. (*quietly*)

Fenton. Stop! Your promise stands between us.

True. Oh, Fenton—you are not the man I thought you were! You must go! You must leave me! I cannot bear to hear you talk that way. (*Fenton retires*) Oh, no, he is all wrong. He is simply suspicious. These reporters—I cannot reproach them for it—see so much of crime and criminals, that they lose faith in human nature. No! no! no!

ENTER LIEUT. CLAIR.

Clair. What is the matter, Sheridan?

True. Well, Lieutenant, I am glad to see you. Only a trifle: a friend of mine, Fenton Frere, intimated that Madame Hanteux was the cause of all my troubles.

Clair. That is preposterous; our friend Frere is apt to be suspicious, and that accounts, perhaps—but here he comes again

RE-ENTER FRERE.

Fenton. I am sorry, I made you feel badly. I have been thinking about the matter: I would not injure any one in the world, and last of all, a woman. I will retract it all, and say I'm wrong.

True. Oh, never mind, Fenton, I shall forget it at once. Listen! I hear some one's voice outside. *(they listen)*

Miles (outside). Why, Doctor, I am extremely sorry to be apprised of Mrs. True's illness. Is she better to-day?

Quiet (outside). Pardon me, Mr. Miles, it is not Mrs. True as you suppose: just walk in, sir.

Fenton. It is Miles.

True (aside). I shall dismiss this doctor presently.

ENTER MILES.

Miles. Good evening, gentlemen. My hand, Sheridan. Many congratulations, and many returns of the same day—I mean anniversaries. Pardon my intrusion just now, but may I inquire why it is you persist in remaining away from the theatre at this time?

True. Really, Mr Miles, it is a necessity.

Miles. Necessity? I am under the impression that your contract requires your presence there, and besides, sir, some important changes must be made in the play and the company at once. There is decided room for improvement in both.

True. I know it. Do anything, Mr. Miles, do anything. You have my full permission to add to, or take from, as you like

Mistortunes never come singly : I am arriving at the point where, like the misanthrope, I am not happy or contented, unless I am miserable, and everybody about me is equally so.

Miles. Gentlemen, Mr. True, misunderstands me. The play has met with success as it is, but—

True. Very well, you may expect me at your office to-morrow morning: I feel somewhat indisposed this evening—

Miles. On account of illness, I dare say. Ah, well, that alters the case—

Fenton. And we have other matters to attend to, Miles.—(*aside to True*) Now, Sheridan, remember the supper. I am sorry it cannot be avoided now, but you must face the inevitable with a smiling countenance. (*exeunt Frere and Miles*)

True. Well, Lientenant, what news of Lillian ?

Clair.—None. The outlook seems dark, indeed. Having failed most signally myself, I have put the matter into the hands of the detectives, who will search Metz and surrounding villages. This is my last hope. I expect a message shortly, and when it comes, I shall bring it here. (*exit*)

True. Matters are coming to a crisis, and unless Jerrold Quiz arrives with glad tidings from Metz, I am lost indeed. Meantime, while there's quiet in the house, I will seize the opportunity and rest: I will sleep off this horrid reality! (*exit*).

ENTER JERROLD QUIZ.

Jerrold. He is not here. Eh! 'tis strange. The letter couldn't have been delivered. Maurice—that's his name—forgot it, I dare say. The lad's in love, and love explains most mysteries. I will look around, I will pry within. (*sees some one standing in the doorway: he looks at her inquisitively for a moment*) Ah! 'tis Madame Hauteux!

Hauteux (entering). Jerrold!—(*half-aside*) Such horrors meet me every moment!—Tell me, who are they that came with you from Metz?

Jerrold. I know but one you speak of. There are not two.

Hauteux. Strange!—(*suddenly*) Ah! you would deceive me.
Speak and let me hear.

Jerrold. I know it not.

Hauteux. Then be off with you! You must not stay here. Go!

Jerrold. So it please you, I will leave the room, but not the house. (*exit*).

Hauteux. They are back again, those I dread and hate; and with them comes another, veiled and silent. Who is she? Who brought her hither? Surely it cannot be—no! no! she is dead and gone. They told me of it long ago. (*hears a noise*) 'Tis his footsteps! He is coming here—but he shall not meet her! I will stand between him and his bride as long as strength abides (*exit*).

ENTER TRUE. *He appears to be overcome with sleep, and throws himself heavily into an arm-chair.*

True. It is useless; I cannot get rid of these vile suspicions. (*pause*) They trouble me still, in spite of myself. I wish Fenton—heigho! (*sighs: his head falls upon his hand; he sleeps*).

Hauteux (enters quietly). Asleep?—May it be his last long sleep! He has wrecked my life and passed me by. Deserted! That is it. In my hatred, in my madness, I felt as though I might have killed him once—but—I thought he loved me. And so it was I drove his bride from home, and followed him like a slave, armed with his master's dagger. But what avails this cunning now? Surely they will meet again, and mock and cast me out. Oh, how desolate am I! How utterly have I failed! The very dart my hand designed for him, has suuk into my own heart. For him, the serpent's sting was harmless: he felt it not. The deadliest draught, methinks, was turned to nectar at his lips, and the bitterest dregs became, when he touched the cup, sweet as honey. He is sleeping still. Oh, that he might never wake! (*suddenly*) Nay! he shall not! I will freight his every breath with soft and subtle vapors. He shall die there and never know it.

Pleasant death! (*takes from her bosom a vial of chloroform, and saturates a handkerchief. She brings it gently near his face, and then suddenly recoils*). Let me think! What am I doing? (*looks around cautiously*). They will seize me, and lock me in a horrible dungeon!—Ah, then, I will die with him, and as I came into the world without a friend, I will die without one. (*as she lays the handkerchief over his face, Jerrold enters from a door near, and interposes a hand.*)

Jerrold. Not now! not now!

Hauteux. Go! You madden me!—Ah! who are they yonder? (*points at Adrian and Lillian entering. The former is arrayed in black; the latter wears any suitable costume. Heavy veils are over their faces.*)

True (*roused by Jerrold*). Ah, Madame Hauteux! (*to Adrian and Lillian, one of whom he remembers to have seen in Metz*). Come, let us enter here——

Hauteux. No! they must not enter. Let them stay without!

True. But you do not mean that. No, no, come——

Hauteux. No! it cannot be. They must stay out!

True. Pardon me, Madame, this house is mine. There is cause, there is reason, they must!

Hauteux (*placing herself before the door*). Nay, they shall not enter!

True (*aside*). She is mad!—(*puts his arm about her*). Be it as you wish, Madame; they shall not.—But grant that one may enter—only one.

Hauteux (*suddenly*). One?—(*looks at both closely*). Yes, she may enter. (*points at Adrian, who retires*). But you (*Lillian*)—I do not like you—you shall never cross that threshold. Go! (*to True*) I fear her! Make them go!—Will you stand there forever? (*True waves them out, i. e. Lillian and Jerrold*)

True. Come, Madame, why all this burning passion?

Hauteux (*incoherently*). Passion?—burning—passion?—Look! Did you not see that shadow-form go by me? There!

True. Compose yourself; there is no gone here but you and me.

Hauteux. It threatens me! Do not let it touch me!

True. It shall not trouble you. See! It is gone from out the room.

Hauteux. Gone! *(suddenly)* and the child!—Did it go with it?

The little child that came from—*(hesitates)* from—Metz, was it?—Yes! and its name was —Nay! I must not say that!

(sighs). Ah, me! my mind grows dark, so dark.

True. Cheer up, Madame, the light will come again.

Hauteux (suddenly). There! what noise was that? Did you not hear it?—*(listens).* It was a voice—*(suddenly)* the voice of the child that I betrayed! *(wildly).*

True. You!—Ah, no! Not you! not you!

Hauteux. Off! Do not touch me! You have made me hate you bitterly!

True. Oh, God!

Hauteux (an expression of sorrow comes slowly over her face, and she lapses into tenderness). Ah, but I am sorry now, so sorry; for I nursed him once—nursed Sheridan True, long, long ago, but he forgot it, and left me to die!

True. Forgot it? No, no, Madame! He remembers those weeks of anguish, and your constant love and care.

Hauteux. Love!—Ah, yes, he loved everybody and everything but me, and I would have died for him!

True. Oh, cruel fate!—Madame, he loved you well.

Hauteux. He? Alas! had I but known it. He is past my loving now: he is here no more—no more. Did you know him? *(weep)*

True. Ah, yes, I knew him long and well. But come, you must not weep for him. It makes me sad. He is not gone from you: he is here, close beside you. Show your womanhood, and be yourself once more!

Hauteux (repeating his words to herself). Myself—once—more? *(with a sudden flash of intelligence)* Oh, that I could be now! *(pauses)* But whither are they gone—my friends of yester-

day? They leave me, they desert me—all have gone!

True. Save one, and he will not forsake you as the others. No! no!—Will you take his hand, Madame? (*he holds out his hand: she looks at him shrinkingly for a moment, and then takes it earnestly*) You shall not lose heart, and hope, and friends together; but give me now your promise, that you will forget the past and all its disappointments.

Hautaux. Forget it?—Ah, me!—*resolutely*) Yes, I promise you!

True. And I will never leave you, but will love you in your pain and sorrow, as you loved Sheridan True long ago. (*ex-cunt*)

ENTER NELL.

Nell. I declare, that child is worrying me to death, pulling my hair out. I'll engage for it, the doctor is at his wits' end to know the trouble. He calls it dentitis, with malaria. What is dentitis, I'd like to know? Oh, here comes a strange-looking lady. What in the world does she want here?

ENTER MRS. POSITIVE.

Positive. Does Mr. Sheridan True live here? Just tell me that.

Nell. Yes, ma'am, this is his home.

Positive. Ah!—Go at once, and tell him I wish to see him.

Nell. What name shall I give him, ma'am?

Positive. No name. Do as I tell you.

Nell. None? Well, it doesn't matter much after all. (*aside*) She seems to be angry with somebody. (*exit*)

Positive. What does it matter one way or the other what my name is?—if there is anything I do despise in *this* world, it is gossip. I abhor it. One cannot go anywhere, or enter any house, without being stared at, and talked about at every turn. The world is coming to a pretty plight, indeed! (*True enters*) Is this Mr. Sheridan True?

True. It is, madam.

Positive. Mr. True, it seems to me you have been acting very queerly of late, to say the least.

True. I? In what respect, madam?

Positive. In every respect. For weeks and weeks, you have not put pen on paper to that unfortunate woman, nor have you sent her a single franc to defray her expenses.

True. What unfortunate woman?

Positive. Why, the woman in the hospital.

True. I hardly understand you, madam. If you are here for information—

Positive. There! let me say a word. What have you done with that poor little child?

True. What little—

Positive. Why, the child I left here with you four weeks ago?

True. You? Oh, no, you left no child here with me.

Positive. I think I ought to know, Mr. True. I keep a strict account of everything I do, or have done.

True. Pardon me, madam; but will you tell me who you are?

Positive. So I will; I overlooked *that*. I am Mrs. Positive, the Matron of St. Therese Hospital, Mr. True. Now you understand?

True. Y-e-s, I remember now. Have a seat, madam, and I will explain everything. I received a letter from you to-day, which I thought was rather obscure—

Positive. Obscure? Allow me to say, sir, that *I* never write obscurely. I pride myself on that. I wrote you eight letters, in which I gave you full directions how to manage in case of sickness and fretfulness, and after that, I concluded to come here myself and see what was the matter. Those letters have not elicited the slightest response from you, not the slightest.

True. You forget, madam, that I have been absent from Paris for several weeks.

Positive. Absent from Paris? That is very strange, indeed, after all I have heard—very strange. Well, I was going on to say, that this little child was born in the hospital at Metz, and its mother, being very poor and on the point of

death for a long time, was perfectly helpless, and could not attend to it. Nor could anybody else, every nurse we had being busy attending to the soldiers. *But*, as soon as I learned that you were her only relative, living in Paris, married, and so in a position to render the child some assistance, I took the liberty of sending it to you, by Madame Hauteux, (who urged me to do so) because I thought, under the circumstances you might at least procure a nurse, and with the assistance of Mrs. True, have the child cared for, out of regard to its mother, who was expected to die at every moment. There! I have relieved *my* conscience.

True. It was sent by Madame Hauteux, you say?—But I protest, I have no such relative. No relative of mine has a child for me to care for—

Positive. As to that matter, sir, you may rest assured that I am not mistaken. I never take steps of this kind, without being perfectly aware of what I am doing—never! (*rises*). This unfortunate woman has now sufficiently recovered to take the trip from Metz, and I wish you to understand that *my* intentions are perfectly honorable. (*exit*)

True. Now this queer lady is angry with me because I have not put pen on paper to this “unfortunate woman.” How could I? As I understand it, this little cherub is kith and kin, and its mother being helpless, and hopelessly ill, this eccentric matron “took the liberty”—however, I will go and look at him again.* (*exit*)

*As was revealed in the first act, Madame Hauteux had just sustained a great and overwhelming disappointment, and in the revulsion of feeling that ensued, she was quick to seize an opportunity of injuring her rival, and thus revenging herself on both. The passions that swayed her then—anger, hatred and jealousy—have driven many another to far greater crimes. Yet she was hopeful; and in this fact there lies an apparent contradiction, or unreasonableness, in the motives that actuated her. In the first act, she was moved by *vindictive passions*, unchecked by any thought of consequences; but in the second, when time had somewhat cooled the fervency of her spirit, and when Adrian had not been found or heard of, love and hope revived again within her. Her rival’s subsequent appearance in her own house, shocked and upset her mind, which had never been stable from the first, and a confusion of thought was the result. She was convinced that Lillian had died: in the wildness of her excite-

ENTER JERROLD QUIZ.

Jerrold. I see the matron of the hospital in Metz is here! This very day she wrote a letter, sealed it, delivered it to me, and then took leave without a word. Now what did all that mean? I'll go and speak to her.

ENTER LILLIAN *veiled*. *She confronts him suddenly.*

Lillian. Come! Let me disclose myself at once!

Jerrold. Disclose yourself? And who are you?

Lillian. I? You do not know me: you have heard my name, but you have never seen my face. I know you, though: your name is Jerrold Quiz. (*Jerrold looks puzzled, non-plussed*)

Jerrold (after reflection). Did you come from Metz?

Lillian. Yes, sir. I have lived there a long time. (*Jerrold collects his thoughts*)

Jerrold (after reflection). Who brought you here?

Lillian. You did! (*Jerrold again collects his thoughts*) Don't you remember?

Jerrold (suddenly). Ah! you know this young lady Adrian. So you do.

Lillian. Yes, sir, I met her in the hospital yesterday. Oh, how can I ever forget her and this gentle matron?

Jerrold. Nay, you can not. She is coming now, and let me tell you, she would not be here to-day, but for Jerrold Quiz. I brought her back under this disguise, and dispelled her doubts.

ment, she was even eager for it: she presupposed it, and resolved to send the child away somewhere. Such a character is by no means a pleasant one to contemplate; and were it not for the woman's unsettled faculties and passions, it would hardly meet with consideration or sympathy. In Madame Hauteux I have endeavored to represent that class of people who are flighty, changeful, and sensitive: who take offence quickly and violently, and who, fostering their own passions, rush *deliberately* into crime, without any special regard for consequences, and often without just or adequate cause. It is this class of people—usually cunning in their methods—that puzzle judge and jury, and medical experts, in the criminal courts of the country.

ENTER ADRIAN, in a new dress - veiled.

Adrian. Jerrold, Jerrold, if you had never met me!—Oh, how nobly has he done, and how deeply have I wronged him!—He is coming, and I shall throw my arms around his neck (*Jerrold restrains her*)

ENTER TRUE with the child in his arms.

True. Here he is! Look! What do you think has happened?

All (*crowding around*). What?

True. He has cut a tooth—at last! (*Lillian, seeing the child, evinces deep emotion, and goes off to one side, followed by Jerrold. At the same moment. Dr. Quiet enters*)

Quiet. Merely dentitis, or cutting of teeth, with malaria!

Adrian. Let me see! Quick! where is his tooth? (*lifts her veil and meets True's gaze*)

True (*looks at her in wonder*). Oh-h! It's Adrian! Quick! take him! hold! him. Somebody—Nellie, where are you! (*Nell enters and takes the child*) Oh, Adrian! The last and best surprise! Who brought you back! (*point at Jerrold*) Jerrold! Why, so he has! My friend, I shall speak with you presently!

ENTER LIEUT. CLAIR.

Clair. Oh, Sheridan, Sheridan, glorious news! My wife has been found at last!

True. Your wife? Where is she?

Clair. In the hospital at Metz.

Lillian. She is not in the hospital, but here! (*lifts her veil*)

Clair. Lillian—my wife—returned at last! (*embraces her*)

True. I knew it! I knew it! It is my sister!

Lillian. Oh, why did you desert me in the time of danger?

Clair. I forsake you? Ah, no!—I was taken prisoner, and could not come back to you.

Lillian. Oh! And when the enemy approached, I fled for refuge and support to a hospital, where I nursed the sick, till I myself took ill. (*Nell comes near with the child, and Lillian evinces deep emotion*)

Clair. Why, what means this sudden flow of tears?

Lillian. I can hardly realize it. That little child is mine! The matron promised it should be cared for here. Do you not know him?

Clair. I? Oh, Lillian, hush!—I haven't seen you in a year. My boy? Ha! ha! ha!

True. Yours, Lillian? Yours? Is it possible—your child? (*playfully*). Well, Lieutenant, I call you to account. Is it possible I have been nursing your boy all these weeks?

Clair. Don't scold, Sheridan, don't scold! I could not help it, and besides, old fellow, I will do the same thing for you one of these days.

ENTER FENTON FRERE WITH MAURICE, *who stands at Nell's side.*

Fenton. Well, old friend, this is news indeed. Young Maurice tell me you have actually found Mrs. True.

True. She has returned, Fenton, after many days; and she is penitent and happy.

Adrian. But no one knows how much I suffered when my uncle drove me from his presence out into the world. Horrors on every side—

Fenton. Very common, Miss Adrian, very common to every one—particularly to reporters. One can no more escape from horrors, than he can outrun his shadow on a sunny day. Now, Sheridan, you must acknowledge at last that you appreciate the present of your friends—the span of horses and the carriage.

True. If Mrs. True will let me, we will drive there presently, and embrace them all—I will.

Fenton. Very well. And the little child—where is he?

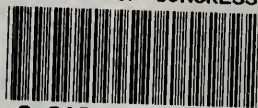
True. Here he is, sir. Take him, Lillian; he is yours, tooth and all.

Fenton. And let me have his name: I shall write his history bye-and-bye.

True. He has a name, which I hope will honor him, and if his mother will permit me, it shall always be,

SHERIDAN TRUE JR.

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